

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

November 17, 2011

Dear Members of the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction:

As the Super Committee pursues its mandate to reduce the budget deficit by at least \$1.5 trillion, we urge you to include in your final deal significant savings from reductions to Member of Congress compensation – both as a commonsense way to cut government spending and to send a powerful message to the American people that Congress should not be exempt from the sacrifices it will take to balance the budget.

Several pieces of legislation have been introduced this Congress in both the House and the Senate to cut Member salaries and curb gold-plated Member retirement benefits, including the only bill introduced in the 112th Congress by Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords. These proposals show that compensation reductions can result in real deficit savings. For example, a five percent cut to the \$174,000 Member salary would save \$50 million over a ten year window, while a ten percent pay cut would save \$100 million. Adjustments to Member benefit packages, which can be worth 47 percent of salaries, according to reports, could also result in millions of dollars in deficit savings.

United States Members of Congress are more generously compensated than legislators in almost every other country in the world. Legislators in the developed nations receive on average salaries that are 2.3 times higher than the average full-time worker, while we receive salaries that are 3.4 times higher than the average full-time wage. Only members of the National Diet of Japan, earning a salary 3.7 times higher than Japanese workers, outpace Members of Congress.

The last time Members of Congress took a cut in pay was on April 1, 1933 – in the midst of the Great Depression. At a time of similar economic turmoil and record deficits, Congress should not require sacrifices of others without tightening its own belt.

Sincerely,



Robert J. Wittman

Reed J. Liddle

Dave Lusk

Niki Bongas

Bill Johnson

Tom J. Nady

Orin Paul

Jim Langerin

Jul H. Chin

[Signature]

Jack Sp.

Billy Schell

Paul A. Loran

Tom Backler

Pat Fung

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Al Duffy

Leonard L. Baswell

Ed Bann

Janet Hahn

Stewart Dean